

A Study on the Status of Operation and Improvement of Apprenticeship

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1. Overview

The purpose of this study is to suggest the improvement for successful operation of Korean apprenticeship through examining the status of operation of current apprenticeship system. The specific purpose of this research is to do the following:

- 1) Analyse the concept, policy stream and the difference between similar system
- 2) Examine the status of operation of apprenticeship system
- 3) Investigate the operation cases of apprenticeship
- 4) Suggest the improvement strategy for successful apprenticeship system

2. Research Method

This study reviews academic literature and performs FGI, case study, expert meeting, and seminar in order to meet the purpose.

The literature review focuses on the concept, the components, progress and current status of apprenticeship. Also it analyses similar system to apprenticeship and identifies the related policies and programs about apprenticeship.

FGI was conducted to build the successful improvement strategy for apprenticeship through investigating the status of operation of current apprenticeship system. FGI was performed five times based on structured questionnaire. The first three interviews were for the status of operation and the second two interviews were for finding out the improvement of apprenticeship.

The visit and interview for case study of company was performed to understand the company's situation and develop the improvement of apprenticeship. The companies which joined the visit and interview was selected by criteria; available for visit and interview, participating in apprenticeship longer than 6

months. Also, it considers types and fields.

The expert meeting was conducted to evaluate the validity of results for progress stages and to raise quality of the study. It consists of policy makers of government department and the experts of vocational education, training and qualifications. The seminar was performed to develop the strategy for improving apprenticeship through sharing the research results and discussing the core agenda.

3. Main Results

1) The Concept and Policy Trend of Apprenticeship, Comparison with Similar system

Apprenticeship is defined as “a new educational, vocational system designed based on German and Swiss apprenticeship system. The in-company trainer teaches apprentices according to the text books based on NCS(National Competency Standards), while the training organization provides academic courses complementarily. It offers qualification after the apprentice completes the proper courses(Relevant Ministries, 2015: 1).”

Meanwhile, the similar system to apprenticeship includes work-based learning such as ‘2·1 system of technical high school, internship, field practice’ and work first-then to college system such as commissioned education, contract department, college in company. The work first-then to college system differentiates from the apprenticeship in terms of focusing on getting degree of high school graduates jobholders. This study explains the similarities and differences of the related systems based on main components of vocational education and training.

2) The Status of Operation of Apprenticeship

The status of operation of apprenticeship was analysed based on 5 FGI results and 9 cases of companies, and it consists of three aspects; design, operation and outcomes of system. In an aspect of designing system, a) purpose, b) governance, c) budget status were considered. In an aspect of operating system, a) selecting company and training center, b) development and verification of apprenticeship program, c) educating and managing in-company trainers and HRD staffs, d) recruiting apprentices, e) operating apprenticeship program, f) internal and external evaluation of apprentices, g) monitoring and consulting were reviewed. In an aspects of outcomes, a) economic outcomes,

b) social outcomes, c) apprentices' outcomes in labour market were considered.

<Table 1> The status of operation of apprenticeship

| | | Challenges |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Design of System | 1. Purpose | 1) Raising the quality of system 2) Dilemma between firm-specific and standardized curriculum 3) Concern about programs linked to college degree |
| | 2. Operation system & Governance | 1) Government-led operation 2) Complicacy of governance system 3) Focusing on control more than support |
| | 3. Budget | 1) Complicacy and redundancy of budget execution 2) Continuity of government support 3) Government support as inducement and control measures |
| Operation of System | 1. Selecting company & Training Center | 1) Controversy about standards of selecting company 2) Non-participation of selected company 3) Absence of operation model for different types of training centers 4) Difficulty of matching training center and company |
| | 2. Development & Verification of apprenticeship program | 1) Lack of company-led program development system 2) Frequent change of program development standards and difficulty of ensuring compliance with NCS 3) Absence of quantitative verification standards |
| | 3. Educating & Managing in-company trainers & HRD staffs | 1) Burden of cluster education 2) Effectiveness of educating trainers 3) Concerns about wrong payment of allowances |
| | 4. Recruiting apprentice | 1) Difficulty of recruiting apprentices 2) Concerns about apprentices' transfer 3) Dropout due to military duty |
| | 5. Operating apprenticeship program(OJT/Off-JT) | 1) Limitation of OJT quality assurance 2) Difficulty of training center's Off-JT operation |
| | 6. Internal & external evaluation of apprentice | 1) Absence of internal evaluation guideline 2) Lack of operation system for external evaluation 3) Uncertainty of granting nationally-recognized qualification after completing the program |
| | 7. Monitoring & consulting | 1) Administrative burden due to monitoring 2) Short of staff for monitoring and consulting |
| Outcomes | 1. Economic outcomes | 1) Financial efficiency through gradually decreasing government support |
| | 2. Social outcomes | 1) Increase of long-service of workers in small sized company 2) Lack of ethics and learning capability of apprentice |

3) Improvement Strategy of Apprenticeship

The improvement strategy of apprenticeship examines the direction of apprenticeship based on the result for the status of operation and sets up the specific strategy and task through the FGI and expert meeting.

There are three strategies to improve the operation of apprenticeship system; reflecting field, guarantee of autonomy and accountability.

Firstly, it is required to adjust the operation paradigm of apprenticeship through reflecting field situation. In other words, it is necessary to transform from government/ supplier-led system to industry/consumer-led system. Secondly, it is important to guarantee autonomy of companies and other participants. It is required to minimize the administrative management and formal procedure and to operate focusing on outcomes of the system. Thirdly, the participants of apprenticeship should have accountability about educating and training human resources within local community and industry. It means that they are responsible for training important man power with not short-term and micro-level, but long-term and macro-level.

The study suggests the 28 tasks of 12 items in three aspects for operation improvement of apprenticeship based on three strategies; a) aspect of designing system, b) aspect of operating system, c) aspect of outcomes of system.

[Figure 1] Strategy & Tasks for Improvement of Apprenticeship

